

CLAIM AMENDMENTS

Claims 1-19 (canceled)

20. (original) A modified nucleotide compound which contains at least one sequence having the formula MN_3M wherein N is a phosphodiester-linked unmodified 2'-deoxynucleoside moiety containing at least one guanine, adenine, cytosine or thymine moiety and M is a methylphosphonate-containing deoxynucleotide.

Claims 21-38 (canceled)

39. (currently amended) ~~The method of claim 21 wherein the A method of inhibiting the function of an RNA, which comprises: contacting said RNA, under conditions permissive of hybridization, RNA is contacted with a modified nucleotide compound which includes at least one sequence having the formula MN_3M wherein N is a phosphodiester-linked unmodified 2'-deoxynucleoside moiety containing at least one guanine, adenine, cytosine or thymine moiety and M is a methylphosphonate-containing deoxynucleoside.~~

40. (original) A method of identifying a nucleotide compound having a combination of nuclease resistance and the ability to form an RNase H substrate when in complex with an RNA, which method comprises:

- (i) preparing modified nucleotide compounds;
- (ii) selecting by exo-and endonuclease digestion those modified nucleotide compounds of (i) which are nuclease-resistant as shown by being capable of forming and electrophoretically migrating as a duplex with a complementary nucleotide compound; and

(iii) selecting by RNase H digestion those of the nuclease-resistance nucleotide compounds of (ii) which act as substrates for RNase H when hybridized with a complementary RNA.

Claims 41-43 (canceled)

44 (currently amended) A compound containing at least 2 separate nuclease resistant components each consisting of 2 or more contiguous phosphodiester-linked 2' deoxynucleosides; wherein at least one of said contiguous phosphodiester-linked 2' deoxynucleosides is unmodified. The compound of claim 42 which, when complexed with a complementary RNA, confers RNase H sensitivity upon the RNA.

Claims 45-48 (canceled)

49. (currently amended) A compound containing at least 2 separate nuclease resistant components each consisting of 2 or more contiguous phosphodiester-linked 2' deoxynucleosides; wherein at least one of said contiguous phosphodiester-linked 2' deoxynucleosides is unmodified and wherein said compound further comprises a modified oligonucleotide or polynucleotide, wherein the modified oligonucleotide or polynucleotide consists of at least one moiety which confers endonuclease resistance and at least one moiety which confers exonuclease resistance. The compound of claim 47 wherein the portion of the compound that can function as an RNase H substrate is located between the moiety conferring exonuclease resistance and the moiety conferring endonuclease resistance.

50-52 (canceled)